



***"MEDIA RELEASE"***  
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# **CRASH LANDING?**

2010 promises less than 2007 despite escalating catastrophe!

***Media Release: - Thursday August 5th 2010***

The attached advertisement will appear in the Adelaide Sunday Mail this weekend. It shows graphically how quickly the disability crisis is escalating as S.A. continues to fail to meet its responsibilities for disability service delivery.

Let's hope that changes in our September 2010 Budget?? and understand SA is not alone!

A 26% jump in the S.A. unmet need disability waiting lists in 12 months is horrific. It is impossible to imagine the depth of family despair behind these numbers!

Any pretence of the states stopping the catastrophic escalation while continually underfunding disability service provision must be addressed by the Federal Government. There is no doubt the states are waiting/hoping for a National Disability Insurance Scheme to remove their legal and moral obligations for disability support. Given that a National Disability Scheme (NDIS)

- Is not guaranteed and
- The final Australian Productivity Commission report is at least 12 months away and
- Further public discussion and debate will take another 12 months minimum after that and
- Implementation if it occurs will be a further two to three years after that at least and
- The Federal Government could change (again and again?) in that time and
- After five years eventually nothing may have happened despite the already established need

The Australian disability community can not be denied additional support for the next four years while boneheaded state treasurers hope the " NDS Cash fairy" will appear to wave a magic wand to save them continuing to posture, preen and pretend what a great job they are doing while surreptitiously winding down growth in disability funding figuring the Feds will sort it out eventually. Both the ALP and the Liberals as part of the 2010 Federal Election process must urgently consider a multi billion dollar crisis management strategy.

The Liberals have not released a disability policy yet (other than education) and the ALP at this stage has tabled significantly less than the new immediate support offered prior to the 2007 Federal Election which totalled some \$1 billion and also demanded state matching!

What are the 2010 elections priorities? We are not sure? The Liberals must show their hand and following last weeks 3000 new aged care beds from Abbott we watched in envy as a Liberal leader with a social conscience slugged business a staggering \$2.7 billion of extra maternity leave tax that pays up to an extraordinary \$150,000 per annum via a 1.5% tax levy previously described by him as "a modest levy".

Mr Abbott is yet to balance his shocking gaffe on disability cinema access with a 2010 fully funded Disability Policy.

This lift in the tax rate is the foundation on which NDS is promulgated and if it is good enough for maternity leave (which is after all by choice and only temporary) surely a short term levy is also appropriate for today's tragic disability crisis which both leaders have spoken too in the last week?

Given Mr Abbott is touching business on community issues Gillard should follow suite NOW!!! for disability. She has after all already committed and allocated future government revenue for maternity leave.

Conversely Abbott can take the federal funds Gillard has promised for future maternity leave and direct it NOW!!! to critical disability support plus some!

While it arguable correct the national disability support services are broken, reality is they are also desperately chronically and systematically underfunded with extraordinary waiting lists and a significant cash injection would wash through the current service structures none of which are operating near capacity and to distressed unmet need waiting list clients very quickly and very effectively.

In the next four years then an orderly review and rebuilding of National Disability Services can be implemented following the Australian Productivity Commission report with a long term sustainable funding model included and the temporary measures eased. On the way through both leaders will win plenty of votes if they

compel, force and demand the delinquent State Governments to meet their current obligations.

A genuine 26% jump in S.A. waiting lists must focus our national leaders acutely on the crisis that is disability in Australia today. It demands immediate action. Our leaders next jobs may depend on it?

**David Holst**

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